

FILE

History of The
West Congregational Church
of
West Peabody, Massachusetts

-by Clara A. Bradstreet

Seventy-Fifth Anniversary
September 6, 1958

THE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535
MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: [Illegible]

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
[Illegible]

History of the West Congregational Church of Peabody

In colonial days Salem included what is now Danvers and Peabody, and people who lived in what is now West Peabody went to the Salem church.

It is interesting to note that a Quaker Meeting was held in a house here near Phelps Mills, about where Berkshire Products Plant is now. The meeting was broken up by the authorities, and there were some arrests because it was considered "a disorderly meeting" meaning that the attendants should have gone to the regular Salem Church.

When Danvers was set off from Salem on June 16, 1752, the First Congregational Church of Danvers was built in Danvers Center, now Danvers Highlands. At that time Peabody became South Danvers, and what is now West Peabody was West Danvers. The people here attended the First Church in Danvers, some in wagons, some on horseback, and some on foot, the women carrying their shoes and stockings in their hands and putting them on when they neared the church, reversing the process when returning home.

Later, when Peabody was set off from Danvers and incorporated as a town in 1868, West Danvers became West Peabody, and South Danvers became Peabody. From that date we were a part of Peabody. Because of the many rocks in South Peabody that section was called Rockville for a long time.

For some years previous to the organization of a church here, religious services were held in a one-room schoolhouse on Lowell Street near the Newburyport Turnpike, and in a hall over Joseph Brown's grocery store in Brookdale, as the area around the Dishful Pond was called then. The hall was called Brookdale Hall. This was near the Winona Woolen Mill. There was quite a settlement around the mill, which was located near Mr. Edward French's house.

Methodists from a Lynn Church, and men from the South Church in Peabody - Mr. Isaac Hardy, Mr. Jacob Perley, Mr. Sam Goldthwaite, Mr. David Galloupe, Mr. Benjamin N. Moore, and Deacon Richard Smith's father came to help in the services. Men from the First Church in Danvers also came over to help. Their names are not on record.

A Sunday School was formed and met in Brookdale Hall about 1859. The first superintendent there was Mr. Horton, who was superintendent of Winona Mill; the next one in charge of the Sunday School was Mr. Fogg, an employe of the mill.

The men from Lynn and from the South Church kept the school and services going until the new school-house was built in 1869, and opened in January, 1870.

This was named the West School, and was on West Street, now Johnson Street, so named for Howard Johnson, who died soon after coming home from service in World War I.

The lower floor was used as a school, and the upper floor was a large hall, fitted up for community gatherings. Here religious services were held, including a Sunday School. Mr. Thomas Flint was the first superintendent of the Sunday School in the hall.

According to a journal kept by the late Mr. George W. Taylor, the first Worship Service in the new Schoolhouse Hall was held all day Sunday, January 9, 1870. Rev. Mr. Bacon, an Orthodox minister from Boston conducted the services at the invitation of Mr. Thomas Flint, Esquire.

On January 16, 1870, services were held in the daytime and in the evening, conducted by Rev. Mr. Hervey of this town. At noon, a Sabbath School was organized, and 70 persons joined in the services. Different ministers conducted these early services in the Hall.

Among other ministers, Mr. Taylor mentioned Rev. Mr. Cleveland preaching in the Hall. He was a Chaplain of the 30th Mass. regiment, and during the winters of '61 and '62 he preached to the soldiers stationed at the Fort on Ship Island. Mr. Taylor had heard him there. Ship Island is in the Gulf of Mexico off the shores of Mississippi.

Mr. Flint served for nearly five years. He was followed by Rev. W. A. Lamb. Next was Rev. C. C. Carpenter. Mr. William Siner was elected superintendent in 1875. In 1882, Mr. Siner resigned when he married Miss Etta Procter and they went to Danvers to live. In October, 1882, Rev. John W. Colwell was elected superintendent. Mr. Arthur W. Felt succeeded him in 1885. Mr. Felt served for many years. Later superintendents were Mr. John Edward Martin, Mr. Edward E. White, Mr. Clarence F. Wentworth, Mr. Edward L. Pease, Mr. Edwin R. Nelson, Mrs. Mary H. McIntire, Mrs. Clara A. Bradstreet, Mr. Douglas Reid and the present one, Mr. William Potter.

In 1870 the Ladies Aid was organized in Schoolhouse Hall with Rebecca P. Goodale as the first president. It was called the Ladies Sewing Circle and was organized to help the Church.

Before West Church was organized in 1883, the Rockville Group - South Peabody was then called Rockville - and our group of church-going folks were working together in holding services. Rev. Charles Lamb, a graduate of Andover Theological Seminary, was engaged as pastor of the two groups. Preaching services and Sunday School were held in Schoolhouse Hall regularly. The two congregations agreed to give a definite part of the minister's salary. Rev. Mr. Lamb preached here from July, 1873 to July, 1875. The Rockville Church was organized in 1874. Rev. C. C. Carpenter succeeded Rev. Mr. Lamb. and ministered to both groups from July, 1875 to July, 1880. He was much beloved by all in both communities.

As he had done missionary work in Labrador, he could tell many interesting stories of his work there. He never forgot us and during his lifetime often came back here to visit. On one of his visits he presented the Sunday School Library a copy of a book he

had written about an Eskimo dog. The book was titled, "Pomiuk", and was very interesting.

This is a true and interesting story about Rev. Mr. Carpenter: On a snowy, blizzardy Sunday in winter only the minister and the sexton, Mr. Charles T. Southwick, were at church at the time of beginning the service. The minister mounted the platform and went through the order of service, including the sermon. Miss M. Louise Danforth, who was later Mrs. Edward E. White, entered after the service had begun, making a congregation of two persons.

After Rev. Mr. Carpenter left in 1880, there is no record of a pastor until February 1, 1881 when Rev. John W. Colwell began his ministry.

In July, 1881, the Rockville Congregational Society was organized--in order to legally own property. Rockville's new Church building, the present one, was dedicated May 22, 1884. The new church cost \$7,100. The old one was sold and moved first to Maple Street, then to Lynn Street where it is now used as an apartment house.

On May 31, 1883, a meeting of people interested in forming a church in this community was held at the home of Capt. Henry Mugford, on Lowell Street, and a committee of five was appointed to obtain the names of all who would unite in forming a church here. There is no record of the names of these five persons on the committee.

After three meetings a Council of Churches was called, and it was decided that a "Branch of the Rockville Church should be here organized", and the following persons were received into membership on September 6, 1883:

Confession of Faith

L. Augustus Cross
Joel L. Southwick
Daniel A. Sheen
Jennie H. Danforth (Shaw)
M. Louise Danforth (White)
Ruth S. Mugford
Rebecca P. Goodale
Matilda M. Felt

By Letter

Arthur W. Felt
Lizzie E. Felt
Maria A. Southwick
Mary A. Mugford
Henry A. Russell
Eliza A. Russell
Mary E. Kennedy

A new communion service was given to the church on September 5, 1883 by Mr. George A. Flint, who sent his kindest wishes for the new church's prosperity. The service consisted of four silver goblets, two plates, and a tankard. Mr. L. Augustus Cross gave a table for the set. These were used on September 6, 1883, and for a long time after that date.

In a later year, January 1, 1907, when the Christian Endeavor Society--an organization composed mostly of adult members of the church--presented to the church a new communion set with individual cups, the four original goblets were given to four

members of the church who asked for them, and the tankard was given to the A.B.C.F.M. for use in some mission field.

Rev. Charles B. Rice of the First Church in Danvers was moderator of the Council, and Rev. F. L. Brickett of Lynnfield was scribe at the organization of the Church.

Our church had the same articles of faith and covenant as the Rockville Church, the same pastor, but chose its own Standing Committee, had its own by-laws, and controlled its own membership.

The Christian Endeavor Society mentioned in a previous paragraph must have started very early in the life of the church because we have two white satin badges, yellowed with age, that are imprinted with the C.E. insignia and the words "West Peabody, Mass. 1886." There must have been a special event at that time. These badges belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Frank W. Southwick and were found among their treasures. This early C.E. Society disbanded after a time but was reorganized on November 10, 1916, with Miss Bessie C. Taylor as president. In a report given later by her, she mentioned among the activities of the society gifts of three dollars each to members Howard Johnson and Everett E. White when they entered the service of the United States Army. At Christmas these two boys and a former member, Charles Leach, were remembered with gifts costing \$2.50 each. Mention was made also of gifts to missions.

In 1922, according to a report by its president, Mr. Everett E. White, the membership rose to 65, which was more than the membership of the church at that time. It was very active in helping the church by conducting Sunday night services, contributing to missions, and to the work of the church. The C.E. motto was, "For Christ and the Church." Off and on through the years there has been a Christian Endeavor Society. Much work has been done for and by the Young People.

In 1884 our church decided to build a new chapel. Mr. Joseph Henderson, of Salem, a former resident, generously gave a half acre of land next to West School. At that time it was a beautiful spot. It is interesting to note that Mr. George A. Flint, who gave generously to the building fund, advised the members not to build "too near the schoolhouse on account of fire and damage from the boys." Despite his advice the church was built next to the school.

The estimated cost of the chapel was \$2,000. \$700 was raised by the church and congregation. Churches in Essex South Congregational Conference contributed generously and the Congregational Church Building Society granted us \$765.

The West Congregational Society was incorporated on October 24, 1885 (so that it could legally hold property). The Society was dissolved in July 31, 1906, and the Church was incorporated. On December 11, 1885, the new chapel was dedicated free of debt at a cost of \$1460.

The Chapel was not as it is now. The auditorium was fitted out with dark red settees, long ones down the center and shorter ones on either side, with two aisles, seating 160 comfortably. Brass brackets between the windows held lamps for lighting. A small organ faced the congregation on the left front and back of it were chairs where the members of the choir sat. Mrs. Alonzo P. Small was organist for years. Mrs. Arthur W. Felt followed her, and then Mrs. Perley C. Goodale. The pulpit was on a small semi-circular platform with steps on two sides. Over the alcove was this inscription, "Holiness Becometh Thine House, O Lord, Forever." One pulpit - still in existence - two side chairs, and a pulpit chair were on the platform. The communion table was on the floor in front of the pulpit. The minister came down and sat beside it during communion. Just back of the sanctuary was a small room where prayer meetings were held on Thursday evening preceding Communion Sunday. This room was sometimes called the Prayer Room.

Sunday School was held in the Church auditorium after the worship service, which began at 10:30 o'clock. Sunday School began at 11:45 o'clock and lasted one hour.

Settees were turned around, etc.,. Adults as well as young people attended Sunday School. Small children met in the Prayer Room.

There was no vestry, just a little hole in the ground large enough for a one-pipe hot air furnace. A register in front of the semi-circular pulpit platform provided the heat. In winter, people who walked or rode to church in open carriages warmed their feet over the register before taking their seats. The windows were so close to the ground that a man of average height could look in through the window to see what was going on

The program of dedication is on record. Rev. Charles Rice of First Congregational Church, Danvers, preached the dedicatory sermon. First Church, Danvers, was often called our "Mother Church." Rev. Mr. Colwell was minister at the time of dedication of the Chapel, but resigned on June 5, 1887, to go to Barrington, Rhode Island. We had 24 members then.

There is no record of a building committee at the time the Church was built. We have a list of a few of the contributors to the building fund. (The list was copied from the original notebook, now yellow with age by Mrs. Clara A. Bradstreet in September 1940.)

We, the undersigned, agree to give the amount opposite our names for the purpose of building a Chapel for the use of the Congregational Church in West Peabody, said amount to be paid in two equal installments on demand, the first on July 1, 1884.

A. W. Felt	\$25.00	F. W. Southwick	15.00
J. L. Southwick	25.00	Ed. E. White	10.00
A Friend	25.00	x x x x	10.00

J. F. Ingraham	\$10.00
F. F. F.	15.00
T. N. Taylor	2.00
P. A. Snyder	5.00
Wm. Siner	3.00
N. B. Case	1.00
R. P. Holt	1.00
F. L. Siner	2.00
Ellen M. Ray	2.00
George Eliot	5.00
Chas. Brown	5.00

Mary Hutchinson	\$1.00
Mite	.50
North Reading Friend	1.00
Rev. Mr. Allen	1.00
E. Hall	1.00
Sebut F. Taylor	10.00
----- Crowell	2.00
W. Spaulding	5.00
Sarah Horner	5.00
Mrs. D. Southwick	5.00
Mrs. E. Arthur Needham	5.00
S. F. Taylor	5.00

Since the Church and parish contributed around \$750.00 it seems reasonable to assume that this list is taken from a notebook of only one of the collectors. There must have been other notebooks and many other contributors whose names and contributions are not known. This list is inserted as an interesting sample.

In 1891 the agreement of union with the Rockville (South Peabody) Church was dissolved, and our Church was organized as an independent church and named "The West Congregational Church of Peabody." That was and is our legal name.

West Church was "on its own" and supported a pastor with the aid - for a few years only - of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society which gave us \$300.00 a year toward the minister's salary of \$700. That seems a small salary, but at that time another nearby church much larger than this one paid only \$1000.00 a year.

Soon it wasn't necessary to receive help as a mission church. The Ladies Aid Society was always ready to help financially and otherwise, and it did. There are many instances on record where the society gave the church considerable sums of money, \$100 at one time, \$500 at another, etc., and so on. They worked hard to earn the money. For a long time there was no water in the church, and when a supper was served, water had to be carried in milk cans - eight quart size - from the pump in front of the schoolhouse. An old stove in the kitchen which didn't work very well added to the difficulties. When supper was served in the rear of the schoolhouse hall, coffee was kept hot in cans over the register.

The first pastor after the relationship with the South Peabody Church was dissolved was Rev. F. A. Holden. He was a full-time resident pastor. He came here with his family, consisting of his wife, Mary, and three children, Chester, Marguerite and Florence. An apartment was rented for them in a house at the corner of Lowell Street and the Newburyport Turnpike, where McGivern's Furniture Store now stands.

In 1892, plans were made to build a parsonage. Land on West Street, now Johnson, was given for this purpose by Mr. Aaron F. Danforth, a gift much appreciated by the church. It is on record that a building committee with Rev. Mr. Holden as chairman was appointed to have the parsonage built. The names of others on the committee are not known.

It was a seven room one-family house with an attic, front piazza downstairs and a side piazza off the kitchen. When it was ready, the pastor and family moved in.

Rev. Mr. Holden kept a cow and chickens. As there were no out buildings, he kept the cow in Mr. Benjamin Danforth's barn, milking her at any time from six o'clock to midnight to suit his convenience. Mr. Danforth milked on Sundays. No one knew where the chickens were kept, some said they were kept in the attic, some in the cellar. It is doubtful they were kept in either place. Maybe there was a shelter for them in the back yard. No one seems to know.

He enjoyed going around to different churches giving talks illustrated with his "magic lantern," as his stereoptican was called. When he and his family left West Peabody, their furniture and personal belongings were packed in a freight car, the cow cosily ensconced in a corner, fenced in by their organ and other articles of furniture.

The next minister was Rev. James A. Anderson, a Scotchman with a broad accent, a dignified gentleman of culture and fine education, who with his wife and young son, George, moved into the parsonage. The church was very proud of him. His intelligence was mental rather than manual, though, because when a nail needed to be driven in anywhere in the parsonage he called upon a member of the standing committee to do it.

One Sunday when Mrs. Anderson was seriously ill, he preached on the text, "What will you do, O young man, at the overflowing of the Jordan?" Almost with tears in his eyes he preached that sermon, and at least one person in the congregation has never forgotten it. God was good to him, and Mrs. Anderson recovered.

Next came to the parsonage Rev. Owen E. Hardy, with his wife and little daughter, Amy.

It was during Mr. Hardy's pastorate that changes were made in the Chapel. The building was raised up, and a basement made. This was used as a Sunday School room, a supper room, etc. Also, the belfry was strengthened and a bell was hung there. Members of the community as well as the church contributed money for the bell because a tapper was put on it so it could be used as a fire alarm. It was used for that purpose for some time.

As to the inscription on the bell, the minister suggested "The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'." Mr. A. W. Felt, chairman of the Standing Committee wanted, "Come now, and let us reason together," Isaiah 1:18. There was a compromise? "Come now, and let us reason together" was inscribed on the bell.

Rev. Mr. Hardy liked this parish the best of all his parishes, said it was more like home here, so he purchased a lot in Oak Grove Cemetery as a final resting place for himself and his family. Mr. and Mrs. Hardy now rest there.

The next minister after Mr. Hardy was Rev. Warren L. Noyes. Mr. and Mrs. Noyes were in their middle years, and had no children.

All of these early resident ministers were very well educated, seminary trained, and good preachers. They contributed much to the spiritual life and growth of the church.

Long before West Peabody Grange was formed here in 1912, there was a very active Farmer's Club that met regularly in Schoolhouse Hall. The meetings were very interesting and lively with discussions, lectures, etc. A Danvers minister came to one of the meetings and gave a lecture on the subject, "The Crow".

This Farmer's Club built the horse-sheds in the schoolhouse yard. They were at the extreme rear of the yards. There were a number of them in a row with a special shed for the horse and carriage of the minister. No one else used this shed. Men of the church and Grange kept the sheds in repair. These sheds were of great use to the church, to people who went to affairs in the schoolhouse, and to the school children who played there on rainy days.

Occasionally a horse went to sleep and got mixed up in his harness, or did not get along with the horse next to him, and there was a commotion in the sheds. It was not unusual for a man to leave a church service quietly to go out to find the cause of the commotion, etc. When horses and buggies went, down went the sheds.

In early days there were various organizations of children and young people, a Christian Endeavor Society, a Junior C.E. Society, a Loyal Temperance Legion, Men's Club, a Thimble Club for Girls, Boy Scouts, Troop #1, Girl Scouts, etc. The Friendly Bunch was an organized Sunday School class taught by Mrs. McIntyre. They were an active lot of boys. The Ladies Aid had monthly socials. There were skating parties, coasting parties, etc. The West Church was really the center of the social as well as religious life of the community. West Peabody Grange contributed much to the social life. Young folks made their own fun, and plenty of it.

On Sundays there was often an interchange of ministers, so the people became very well acquainted with the Congregational ministers in near-by towns.

Receptions and parties were given for West Church ministers, and at least one memorable "Old Home Day" in 1925, was enjoyed by many people.

For a number of years a Winter Carnival was held on the 22nd of February under the auspices of the Ladies Aid. Ski jumps were built on the hill in Taylor's field. Many Finnish people and others came up from downtown. Refreshments were served on the field and in the church. This was a grand occasion anticipated by all, but had to be given up when the snow failed to fall for the holiday.

Rev. James J. Goodacre was our minister for several years. He was a retired Congregational minister, who lived on Andover Street. There is no record of the number of years he was here. He loved to preach, and did on every possible occasion. When he conducted a funeral he preached a sermon because said he, "That is the only time I have a chance to preach to some people."

Under the leadership of Rev. Mr. Goodacre, a West Church Men's Club was formed on October 10, 1911, with Mr. Edward L. Pease as president, and Mr. Frank K. McIntire as secretary. A constitution was written and adopted, and various committees formed. This Club became very active in the life of the church. Its civic committee was instrumental not only in getting benefits for the club and church, but for the community, as well. The records are in a book, and are interesting to read.

Rev. Mr. Fred D. Gealy, a student at Boston University, preached to us from November 1918 to June 1920. He went as a missionary to Japan.

Rev. Gordon C. Shedd preached from January, '21 to June, '21. He changed to the Pentecostal Church.

Rev. Natt H. Scott was ordained on December 7, 1922, in this church. He was a graduate of Gordon College. The Council of the Essex South Conference met here and voted to ordain him. He and Mrs. Scott lived here in the parsonage. He left in May, 1923.

Rev. Charles W. Cory came here with his bride on July 1, 1923 and lived in the parsonage until July 31, 1925.

Rev. James E. Bowker was here from October, 1925 to August 31, 1927, first year as a student, the second year he and his bride lived in the parsonage. His salary was \$1500 a year.

In 1926, with Mrs. William B. Moore as president, the Ladies Aid borrowed \$3000 from the Lincoln Co-operative Bank of Lynn, giving the parsonage as security, and made the parsonage over for two families by adding two rooms, bathrooms, an upstairs front piazza, etc., making the parsonage as it was until sold last year. The Prudential Committee acted as Advisory Board on this program. Mrs. Moore stayed in as president for nine years until the mortgage was paid off.

The upper floor was rented, and when there was no minister occupying the lower floor that was rented, too, with the understanding that the rental would be terminated with the calling of a minister who needed it.

In 1928, the church celebrated its 45th anniversary. Letters were sent far and near, inviting former pastors and members to come. Many letters were received, either accepting or regretting. These letters are on file. It was a three-day affair, Thursday, Friday and Sunday. The highlight of Sunday's celebration was the presentation of a new communion table and chair. This project was sponsored by Mrs. McIntire and her Sunday School Class, "The

Friendly Bunch." The cost of the table was \$69.00, the plate attached to it was \$7.50, and the chair \$25.

Letters were sent to about 25 members and former members, whose relatives had been members and had passed away. The response was very favorable, and the money for the table was given, "In Remembrance." The chair was given by Deacon Frank K. McIntire (anonymously at the time.) There seems to be no record of the program on that occasion, but there is a list of persons who contributed to this Memorial Communion Table.

The chapel must have looked its best for the 45th Anniversary, because in 1926 the Friendly Bunch had painted the outside of the building under the direction of Mr. Arthur J. Phillips, who gave much time, labor, and financial help to the project. He and the boys were thanked by the church.

Names of contributors to the Memorial Communion Table in 1928:

<u>Contributor</u>	<u>In Memoriam</u>
Charles T. Southwick	Mr. & Mrs. Joel L. Southwick
Walter H. Southwick	Mr. & Mrs. Joel L. Southwick
Edward E. White	Carrie M. White & M. L. Danforth White
Mrs. Jennie Shaw	Louise Danforth White
James B. Eator	Mrs. James B. Eaton
Mrs. Nellie Sawyer	Mrs. James B. Eaton
Mrs. S. Edward Mudge	Mrs. Emma L. Goodale (Mrs. J.O.)
Mrs. A.W. Felt	Mr. A.W. Felt
Lewis A. Felt	Mr. A.W. Felt
Chester W. Russell	Deacon Henry A. Russell
Mrs. Edward Durkee	Mrs. Mary Kennedy
Frank K. McIntire	Carolyn W. McIntire
William Siner	His sister, Mrs. Croughwell
George W. Ray	Mrs. Ellen M. Ray
Frank Ray	Mrs. Ellen M. Ray
Mrs. Anna B. Ludden	Mr. & Mrs. E.S. Meek
Mrs. Audrey E. Rankin	Mr. & Mrs. E.S. Meek
Everett E. White	Carrie M. White
Harry H. White	Carrie M. White
Mrs. Alice Atwood	Mr. Everett Twiss
Mrs. Lewis A. Flet	Mr. & Mrs. McKenzie
Miss M.F. McKenzie	Mr. & Mrs. McKenzie
Mrs. T.A. Martin	Thomas A. Martin
George H. Thurell	Matilda Martin
Miss Mary R. Condon	Mabel J. Thurell
Mrs. Owen E. Hardy	Abbie Southwick Langdale
	Rev. Owen E. Hardy

During the years there have been a number of gifts and legacies to the church. It is hoped by some members that sometime, perhaps when we have a new and larger church there will be a "Book of Remembrance" where all these gifts may be listed.

In 1928, the treasurer was authorized to keep a special account of legacies given to the church, the names of the givers, and names of securities in which the amounts are invested. Probably other gifts will be listed there.

In 1928 the local troop of Boy Scouts was endorsed by the church.

Mr. Edwin Nelson was elected assistant deacon in 1929. He served from that time until this year, 1953, first as assistant to Mr. F.K. McIntire, then as a deacon, then as chairman of the deacons. He was temporarily absent in 1946 because of health, but was re-elected in 1947 in the spring. 28 years of service! His resignation this year was accepted with regret.

Rev. John Guyer was called as pastor in 1931, and in that year the church was renovated, painted, etc., at a cost of \$375. Also, the Ladies Aid assumed a church debt of \$500.

In 1933, Rev. Roland Rice was our pastor. He and Mrs. Rice occupied the parsonage. He was a student at Boston University.

It was voted, in 1934, to have a small cross in the archway of the sanctuary, and Mr. Clarence Wentworth offered to build it.

Rev. Mr. Hess came as pastor on February 6, 1936, and stayed until July of that year, when Rev. Frank H. Baker, a resident of Reading, came. He was a well-read, educated gentleman of mature years, who, out of the many experiences of Christian living, drew his material for his helpful sermons. His wife and daughter attended church here while he was pastor.

In 1937, the basement of the church was repaired at a cost of \$650, paid by the Ladies Aid Society, and this year new hymn books were bought.

In 1938, the Spring Conference of the Essex South Association of Congregational Churches was held in this church. West School Hall was used for the services, and supper was served in the vestry of the Church.

The church voted, in 1939, to discontinue Sunday and Thursday evening meetings, and this was done, beginning September 10.

The church invited Rev. William H. Brittain to be our pastor. Besides his pay he was to have the use of the parsonage apartment and one month's vacation with pay. He came to us on December 1, 1940, and stayed until March 17, 1946, when a call from the Orthodox Congregational Church in Manchester, Massachusetts, took him away from us. He was one of our most popular ministers, and endeared himself to all of us. Perhaps one reason we liked him so well was because he married one of our girls, Katherine Kolhonen. There was a large and beautiful wedding in our church which all of us attended, and another bride moved into the parsonage.

On the eleventh of January, 1942, it was voted to buy an electric organ to replace the one then in use. And on February 1 of that year, the electric two-manual organ was first used in the service. Sunday evening services were again held at 7 o'clock. In this same year a Service Honor Roll was placed in the vestibule.

In 1943, the Sunday evening service was discontinued so the minister could work with the young people.

On June 9, 1946, a Reed organ (Estey) was purchased. The organ was a two manual, six and five stops, electrified. The organ cost us \$650.

Rev. Norman P. Eisnor was elected pastor on July 2, 1946. On October 13 of this year, the time of beginning the morning church service was changed from 10:30 to 10:45. This church voted on December 1, 1946 to unite with the Peabody churches in forming a Council of Churches.

The Plan of Union of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches was approved by this church in 1947.

In this year, 1947, in August, our pastor, the Rev. Norman P. Eisnor, died after an operation. He passed away suddenly in the parsonage, the only one of our pastors who died during his pastorate here. He had a brilliant mind and much musical ability.

On October 7, 1948, Rev. Howard P. Weatherbee was chosen to be our Interim Minister for six months. He stayed with us until May 31, 1950. His pastorate was a very active one. He was an expert on raising money and one month after he came here to be specific, on November 7, he presented two gifts of money, \$500 to pay the balance on the loan of the Church Building Society when the chapel was built, and \$500 to be used for repairs or things most needed.

Some of our newer members may wonder that the \$500 had not been paid to the Church Building Society long before. This is the true story:-

When the Chapel was built in 1885, the Congregational Church Building Society loaned the church \$750, \$250 of which was paid back. At the time of the loan it was understood that the church would take an offering each year for the work of the Building Society. The church did that. Then came a time when the Friendly Bunch was looking for a special project to work on. A letter was written in to the Congregational House asking if it would be a good thing to pay off the \$500. A letter came back to Mrs. McIntire stating that when the money was loaned, it was not expected to be paid back except by voluntary offerings to their work. Mrs. McIntire has the letter. The letter suggested that the boys take up some missionary project. Time went on. Probably a new group of officers took over and decided to call it a mortgage. Anyway, the church could have paid it before, but thought they did not want us to do that because they wanted a hold on us as Congregationalists.

Anyway, the loan was paid back and the mortgage burned. On November 21, Mr. Weatherbee presented additional gifts to the church.

On February 13, 1949, it was decided that our church needed to be re-habilitated and a Rehabilitation Committee was appointed, consisting of the Prudential Committee--Lucilla P. Moore, E. Forrest Southwick, Esther M. Snow, Robert L. Loughlass, Theodore R. Stocker--and Henry J. Haviland, Theodore D. Raymond, Edwin R. Nelson, Mrs. Ruth Southwick, and Mrs. McIntire. Later, Messers Parrish, Kiley, Moore, Kolhonen, and Miss Drew were added to the committee.

Other committees were appointed, many meetings held, money was solicited, the church was repaired, and an addition was built on the rear of the church, 20' x 30'. The Prudential Committee was authorized to spend \$13,000 for the project, necessitating putting a mortgage of \$5000 on the parsonage, and giving a note to the Warren National Bank of Peabody.

Mr. Frank McIntire resigned for his office as clerk, which he had held for many years. He was elected Clerk Emeritus.

On November 27, 1949, the Prudential Committee was allowed to spend more than \$13,000, using the greatest discretion.

Rev. Mr. Weatherbee resigned on January 1, 1950.

The Rehabilitation Project was completed and a Rededication Service was held at 4 o'clock on January 15, 1950, with the church crowded. Rev. Albert Buckner Coe, president of the Massachusetts Congregational-Christian Conference was the main speaker. Rev. Mr. Weatherbee presided. Rev. William H. Brittain, Rev. Russell Schofield, minister at Magnolia, Mr. Carleton Stearns, moderator of the Essex South Association, all congratulated the church. Rev. Mr. Weatherbee had invited President Harry Truman, Governor Paul Dever, and other prominent leaders at that time. None came, but letters from them were received. Delicious refreshments were served in the vestry. Mrs. William B. Moore and Mrs. Clara A. Bradstreet were the pourers.

On April 23, 1950, it was unanimously voted to invite Rev. Arthur Teikmanis to be our pastor. His pastorate began on June 1st of that year. While he was here the Sunday School conducted the first Daily Vacation Bible School for two weeks in the summer. Rev. and Mrs. Teikmanis and daughter Sylvia, moved into the parsonage. Mr. and Mrs. Teikmanis and Sylvia were born in Latvia. He had been minister of a church there. During the war they were taken prisoners and escaped from a prison camp.

It was voted at a meeting on October 25, 1951, to allow West Peabody Grange to meet in the vestry of the church. On that same date, it was voted that Rev. Mr. Teikmanis appoint a committee of five to work with him on unifying and revising the constitution and to recommend changes. At a meeting on June 29, 1952, the new revised constitution was read and accepted. It was voted that it

go into effect on October 1, 1952. The Church mortgage was burned at this meeting.

On December 7, 1952 a letter of dismissal was granted to Rev. Mr. Teikmanis and Mrs. Teikmanis that they might unite with the Highland Congregational Church of Lowell to which Mr. Teikmanis had been called as pastor.

Rev. Frederick Simms was called to be our pastor by a unanimous vote. He was a student at Gordon Divinity School. He and his family moved into the parsonage. They had two children.

At the annual meeting on October 29, 1953, it was voted that the church go under the scope of the Social Security Act to benefit those employed by the church.

On June 26, 1955, an amendment was made to the Constitution: Article VII - Item 5, concerning the Every Member Canvass Committee, to read: "A director and two assistants for the Every Member Canvass shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church, one member for three years, one for two years, and one for a term of one year, and every year thereafter one member elected each year for a term of three years."

Rev. Mr. Simms sent in his resignation as pastor on November 27, 1955, to become effective on January 1, 1956. It was voted to accept this with regrets.

Mr. Christopher A. Lyons, a second year student at Gordon Divinity School, was called to West Church by a unanimous vote, on Sunday, January 29, 1956. Soon after, he and Mrs. Lyons moved into the parsonage.

At about this time West Peabody began to change. Pastures turned into house developments. With the growth of population in town, attendance at church increased.

On October 25, 1956, the mortgage was burned by Mr. Lyons, assisted by Mr. Edwin E. Nelson, Mr. Earl Isbell, Miss Madeline Drew, and Mr. Theodore R. Stocker.

Mr. John Blackman was chosen youth director, and he and Mrs. Blackman were made honorary members of the Church. Mrs. Lyons had previously been welcomed into the church.

On October 25, 1956, the church voted to investigate the matter of selling the old parsonage and building a new one.

On Sunday, December 2, 1956, the church voted to have double sessions, one at 9:30 a.m. and one at 10:45 a.m. This was necessary because of crowded conditions. Double sessions started on December 23, 1956; also double sessions in Sunday School were started at about the same time.

There was a lack of parking space for cars. The city generously sold us forty feet of land in the old schoolhouse yard, adjacent to the church for \$1.00. The date was October 24, 1957. Mr. Edwin R. Nelson was empowered by vote of the Church to lease 300 feet of land adjacent to the church from the Boston and Maine Railroad at \$12.00 a year, subject to renewal. Efforts still continue to purchase this land, though the city of Peabody now owns it.

On April 2, 1957, the trustees were authorized to sell the old parsonage on Johnson Street at the best possible price; to act as a Building Committee; and to proceed to build a new parsonage at a cost not to exceed \$16,000. Fund raising for the new parsonage began on June 23, 1957, and about \$3,500 was pledged. The church property was mortgaged also to obtain funds.

In Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Mr. Lyons was ordained a Congregational minister by the West Church and Darlington Church, his home church, on June 28, 1957. A gift of books valued at \$250 was presented to Rev. Mr. Lyons by both churches. At this service, Cathryn Anne, the little daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Lyons was baptized.

The trustees of our church were busy selecting a site for the new parsonage. On Tuesday, April 2, 1957, the church voted to purchase the property of Mr. Charles S. Young, Sr., on Taylor Street. Mr. Young gave the church a delightful surprise when he informed the church that the land would not be for sale, but would be a gift to the church from him and his family. A most generous gift, greatly appreciated by the church!

Things happened fast! On Saturday, April 20, 1957, men of the church and congregation began to clear the property. The trustees under the leadership of the chairman, Mr. Theodore R. Stocker, had the plans made for the house, and had it built after the church had approved the plans. Mr. Dana Jordan was the contractor, and local business men were employed in the building as much as possible. The Ladies Aid contributed the combination doors and windows. Men of the church and parish did the work of grading, making the lawn, etc.

Rev. Mr. Lyons and his wife and daughter moved into the new parsonage on September 18, 1957. The beautiful parsonage was dedicated on October 13, 1957, on the occasion of "Open House" there. Rev. Mr. Lyons and the deacons conducted the dedicatory program. Rev. Walter R. Greenwood was an honored guest, representing the Massachusetts Congregational Christian Conference. Mrs. Greenwood was also present, and Mr. Dana Jordan, the contractor, presented the keys of the house to the church.

After an inspection of the house, refreshments were served by a committee from the Ladies Aid--Mrs. Lucilla Moore, Mrs. Emma Saxby, Mrs. Edna Small, Mrs. Edith Small, and Mrs. Agnes Stocker.

The trustees who worked so hard to have it built were Mr. Theodore Stocker, Mr. E. Gerry Mansfield, Mrs. Edna Small, Mrs. Edith Small, Mr. E. Forrest Southwick, and Mrs. William B. Moore, Sr. This is written up in a leaflet that is on record. There is a fine description of the parsonage in it.

On March 8, 1958, our pastor was installed in our church by the Essex South Association of Congregational Christian Churches. The ministers and delegates met at 4:30 p.m. in this church, made their examination, etc., and Rev. Mr. Lyons read his statement of faith. Their vote was favorable, so after a supper in the vestry of the church, a public service of installation took place at 7:30 o'clock in the evening.

To our entire satisfaction, he is now serving as full-time pastor, and full-time to him means all day and most of the night. Mrs. Lyons is musical, and a great help to her husband and to the church. They have two daughters, Cathryn Anne, and Susan Faith.

We have had many ministers since 1883--twenty five in all. The reason for so many is that many of them were students who stayed with us only until they finished their education. A list of them follows.

This church has always been proud of the fact that one of its members, Henry H. White, went to China as an agricultural missionary. He, his wife, and five children (four of them born in China) managed to escape during a rebellion there. Mr. White gave us some very interesting talks on his experiences there.

The outstanding church worship service so far this year was on Easter Sunday morning. The service was held in the Taylor Auditorium of the new Kiley School so that all the congregation could worship together. 504 persons attended the service. A successful attempt was made to have the auditorium look church-like, and the service impressive. A large white cross decorated with lilies was on the platform, and over eighty lilies were grouped about, making a pleasing effect. Both choirs sat on the platform, and an electric organ was hired for the occasion. Forty new members were welcomed into our church fellowship that day.

This year is a most critical year because we are about to carry on a building program. On July 1, 1958, it was voted to hire the Wells Fund Raising Organization to raise money to build a new part to our church that will seat 250 people at one time, this campaign to start in November.

This summer the interior of the church has been painted and renovated at a cost of approximately \$1100. It is fresh and clean for our anniversary.

Ministers from 1883 - 1958

1883 - 1887 Rev. John Colwell
1887 - 1891 Rev. Israel Ainsworth
 After 1891 when this church
 separated from its affiliation
 with the So. Peabody Church and
 became "The West Congregational
 Church of Peabody"
1891 - Rev. F. A. Holden
 Rev. James A. Anderson
 Rev. Owen E. Hardy
 Rev. Warren L. Noyes
 Rev. Stanley Marple
 Rev. Charles W. Shumway
 Rev. Fred D. Gealy
 Rev. Gordon C. Shedd
 Rev. Natt H. Scott
 Rev. Charles W. Cory
 Rev. James J. Goodacre
 Rev. James E. Bowker
 Rev. L. B. Brewster
 Rev. John W. Guyer
 Rev. Roland P. Rice
 Rev. Burton L. Hess
 Rev. Frank H. Baker
 Rev. William H. Brittain
 Rev. Norman P. Eisnor
 Rev. Howard P. Weatherbee
 Rev. Arthur Teikmanis
 Rev. Frederick Simms
 Rev. Christopher A. Lyons

Members Previous to 1918

Fifteen Charter Members - deceased
Walter H. Southwick - deceased
George W. Ray - deceased
Frank S. Ray - living in 1958
Catherine M. Craig - deceased
Caroline Hoagaboom - deceased
Florence Legro Sillars - deceased
Alice Flint Page Perry - living
Louise M. Thomas Lincoln - living in Barre, Mass.
Gertrude F. Thomas - now a member of So. Church, living in
 Peabody, 3 Monroe Street.
1896 Beatrice E. Provan - moved to Kentucky
 Clara A. Southwick Bradstreet - a member of West Church.
 Alma L. Goodale Mudge - living, 214 Essex Street, Lynn.
 Mabel L. Warner. - deceased

All six people named above joined West Church in 1896 in
July, the first Sunday. Rev. James A. Anderson was pastor.

Mary J. Holden - deceased
Mrs. Owen E. Hardy - deceased - Oak Grove Cemetery
Edna Mansfield Smith - living at 510 Lowell Street, Wakefield.
Mr. and Mrs. Graham - deceased
Mr. and Mrs. Melbourne D. Skinner (?) residence unknown
Irene P. Skinner - Residence unknown
Mr. and Mrs. John Perkins - deceased
Mrs. Eva Mitchell
Angeline Eva Mitchell
Henry H. White - now living in New Jersey

Almost every Sunday there are flowers in West Church. In recent years, this is due to the work of a Flower Committee with Mrs. Bessie Chase, Chairman. Miss Bessie C. Taylor, Mrs. Edwin R. Nelson, Mrs. William B. Moore and others have helped to make the sanctuary beautiful.

Deacons who have served through the years, as many as can be remembered, are Deacons Henry Russell, Frank K. McIntire, George H. Thurell, Edwin R. Nelson, Edward E. White, Clarence F. Wentworth, Henry J. Haviland, Robert Douglass, Dwight Ayers, E. Forrest Southwick, Douglas Reid, Theodore R. Stocker, Ray Turner.

Deaconesses - Mrs. Agnes Stocker, Mrs. Anna Isbell, Mrs. Ruperta Parrish, Mrs. Ruth Southwick, Miss Bessie C. Taylor and Mrs. Clara A. Bradstreet.

- Note 1958 - Mrs. Stocker and Mrs. Anna Isbell resigned from the Board of Deaconesses, and Mrs. Helen Turner was elected a Deaconess.
- Mr. John Truman was elected a Deacon.
 - Mr. Edwin R. Nelson was elected an Honorary Deacon.
 - Present Deacons are Mr. Robert Douglass, Chairman, Mr. E. Forrest Southwick, Mr. Ray Turner, Mr. John Truman, and Mr. Edwin R. Nelson, Honorary Deacon.

West Church has always had a choir. At first, there were only a few women who sang in it. They considered it a great honor to sing in the choir. Choir robes were not worn until Miss Helen E. Phillips was choir director. The first minister to wear a robe was Rev. William H. Brittain. His robe was of beautiful material, and was made by Mrs. Esther Snow. Since Mr. Brittain's time all the ministers have worn robes. Robes for the choir were made by the members of the Ladies Aid Society in the beginning. Music by the choir has always added greatly to the worship services of the church.

The persons who have directed the choir are as follows:
Mr. Edward L. Pease, Miss Helen E. Phillips, Mrs. Ralph Barr, Rev. Norman P. Eisnor, Mr. Edwin R. Nelson, Mrs. Irving Jones, Mrs. E. Gerry Mansfield, Mr. Frank Johnston.

Our early organists served for long periods, willingly giving their talents to the work of the Lord. Mrs. Alonzo Small, Mrs. Arthur W. Felt, Mrs. S. Perley Goodale and Mrs. Margaret Kolhonen deserve the gratitude of the church. Miss June Carlson, a student at Gordon College, came to us as organist, resigning in June, 1958. We enjoyed having her with us. Filling in as organists when needed were Mrs. Lillian Wederbrand, Mrs. Ralph Barr, Miss Bessie C. Taylor, Mrs. E. Gerry Mansfield, and Mr. Edwin R. Nelson.

Treasurers since 1918

Mr. Perley C. Goodale (now deceased)
Mrs. Arthur Wentworth
Mr. Clarence Parrish
Miss Madeline Drew

Some of the Sextons

Mr. Everett Twiss (deceased)
Mr. Gilbert Lane (deceased)
Mr. Willard Tenney - for a short time
Mr. Raymond Bradstreet - for a short time
Mr. Perley C. Goodale (deceased)
Mr. Francis Saxby (deceased)
Mr. Clarence Parrish

Possibly because of the faithfulness of these persons our church building still stands. WE THANK THEM.

The oldest person in continuous membership in West Church is Mrs. S. Perley Small, who joined this church on January 6, 1901. Members oldest in years but not in membership in our church are Mrs. John Martin, who is 92 years old, and Mrs. Frank K. McIntire, who is 90 years of age.

A member of our parish, but not of our church, Miss Nellie M. Taylor, is 91 years old. Her mother was an active member of the Ladies Aid, and Miss Taylor belonged to the T.F.T's, "The Faithful Twelve" who, when they were girls, helped the Ladies Aid. Mr. Sebut Taylor, her father, was one of the contributors to the Building Fund for the chapel when it was built.

The youngest member of the church is David Turner, who is now 12 years old. He joined when he was 9, the youngest person ever to unite with our church.

In 75 years our membership has increased from 15 members to about 225.

At almost all of our business meetings, the hymn, "The Church's One Foundation is Jesus Christ, our Lord," has been sung at the beginning. Is not that significant of our faith and belief?

Long ago, The Apostles' Creed was chosen as our creed.

Mention has not been made of the Daily Vacation Bible School, which has been held for two weeks in the summer. Rev. Mr. Teikmanis was the first minister to undertake this project. A director came from Boston to carry it on. Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Simms continued it, and directed it. Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Lyons have directed it for the past two years. This Vacation School has been most successful each year, and has had an attendance of over 100 children each year.

Also, West Church has cooperated with the Peabody Council of Churches in maintaining its program of Released Time Religious Education. Attendance of 7th and 8th grade children at classes in our church has been just about 100% of West Peabody Protestant children.

Mention should be made of West Church Couples' Club - a newly formed organization contributing to the social life of its members, thus making newcomers acquainted with one another.

To Those Who are Interested

The tankard of the first communion set used in 1883 was given to the A.B.C.F.M. for use in some mission field. It was given in 1923 to Rev. John Bicknell, a missionary on furlough, who took it to Ceylon for use in the Church at Vadderkodai.

West Church has had its days of comparative prosperity, and its days of deep depression and discouragement. At two different times attendance was so small, and the treasury so low in funds that we were in debt, and it seemed as if the church might have to give up. In both instances new leadership solved the problem.

Now, in closing this historical sketch, may we add that West Church is grateful to all its ministers, officers, members and friends in the community, who have made possible its existence by their prayers, their allegiance to the Divine Lord and Master, and their willingness to do the work of advancing His Kingdom in West Peabody.

West Church welcomes all the newcomers, and is grateful for their help and support.

As this church enters upon an Expansion Campaign this November, 1958, may plans be made in faith and prayer that God whose "arm is never shortened" will help if the church does its part. The Bible tells us that, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

The 100th Anniversary of West Church should be a triumph never dreamed of by the 15 charter members in 1883.

Clara A. Bradstreet
Church Historian



